



CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD

Fighting for Illinois Consumers

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Making history: CUB Works with GAOI, MREA to Launch Its First-ever Geothermal Group-Buy Program
Grow Geo helps Chicagoland homeowners buy discounted heat pumps, cut utility bills

CHICAGO—For the first time in its history, a top Illinois consumer watchdog is helping to launch an innovative program to help Chicago-area consumers install a geothermal heat pump system at a discount and cut their utility bills.

The Citizens Utility Board (CUB) is partnering with the Geothermal Alliance of Illinois (GAOI) and the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) to hold a Zoom session to answer consumer questions about heat pumps and joining the local group-buy program, called Grow Geo Chicagoland. These informational sessions, called “Geo-Power Hours,” will be held through November. The online kickoff event is:

7 p.m. Wednesday, April 5th [Register here](#)

This is the first heat pump group-buy program of its kind put on by GAOI, MREA and CUB. The program covers homeowners and building owners in Cook, DuPage, Will, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Winnebago and Boone counties.

“Grow Geo Chicagoland fits with our mission of educating consumers about how to cut their utility bills,” said David Weaver, CUB’s Carbon Free Buildings Coordinator. “At a time of skyrocketing fossil fuel prices, consumers need options on how to reduce heating and cooling costs. A lot of consumers may not know much about geothermal heat pumps, but this could be the right option for more consumers than ever before, given all the incentives available. We hope this program raises awareness.”

This group-buy program is designed to educate consumers about geothermal, and for those interested in participating it secures a reliable contractor to install such systems at a volume-pricing discount. The Grow Geo program also has a series of price breaks as the program hits participation benchmarks.

Geothermal heat systems are an energy efficient method for heating and cooling a home. Much like a refrigerator, heat pump systems utilize electricity to move heat from cool spaces to warm spaces and vice versa. In the case of geothermal heat pumps, they move heat from the ground to your home or from your home to the ground. Because heat pump systems move heat rather than generate it, they are more cost-efficient. Geothermal heat pumps can reduce energy costs by up to 70 percent compared to traditional systems.

There are many variables that affect the upfront cost of a geothermal heat pump but such a system for an average-sized home can cost an estimated \$30,000. However, local and federal incentives are at an all-time high, and can dramatically reduce that price tag.

For example, the Federal Inflation Reduction Act, passed in 2022, created a 30 percent tax credit for the total cost of installation, plus a \$2,000 energy efficiency tax credit for heat pumps. ComEd offers a rebate of up to \$9,000, depending on the size of the system, for eligible customers. These systems typically last about 25 years, and because of significant energy savings, studies show that geothermal installations can pay for themselves in about six to eight years.

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The program officially launches April 5, and the deadline to participate is November 30. Visit www.growgeo.org for more information.

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About

Grow Geo Chicagoland is a non-profit run program connecting residents of northeastern Illinois with education and competitive bulk pricing on geothermal heat pump systems. Save money and energy by switching to the most efficient option for heating and cooling. Our group-buy program provides educational sessions and preferential pricing from vetted geothermal heat pump installers.

Citizens Utility Board (CUB) is Illinois' leading nonprofit utility watchdog group. Created by the Illinois Legislature, CUB opened its doors in 1984 to represent the interests of residential and small-business utility customers. Since then, CUB has saved consumers more than \$20 billion by helping to block rate hikes and secure refunds. For more information, call CUB's Consumer Hotline at 1-800-669-5556 or visit CUB's award-winning website, www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org.

The **Geothermal Alliance of Illinois (GAOI)** is the statewide trade association for the geothermal heat pump industry in Illinois. GAOI was formed in 2008 and today provides training and certification programs for contractors and technicians in support of the industry. GAOI also works to educate consumers on energy efficiency and renewable energy with geothermal, which is the most efficient heating and cooling technology available and known today. For more information, visit www.gaoi.org.

The **Midwest Renewable Energy Association** was incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit shortly after the first Energy Fair in 1990. MREA's mission is to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living through education and demonstration. To learn more, call 715- 592-6595 or visit www.midwestrenew.org.